

## **Parks and Recreation Division 2003 Second Quarter Report**

The Omnibus Parks Ordinance (Ordinance 14509), adopted November 18, 2002 by the King County Council, included a reporting requirement for the Parks and Recreation Division. Specifically, the ordinance states:

*“The division shall provide a written report to the council, filed with the clerk of the council, at least four times each year, by March 15, June 15, September 15, and December 15, and more frequently as directed by the council by motion, regarding the execution of the division’s duties and responsibilities as established in K.C.C., 2.16.045.E. Following transmittal of each written report, the division shall also make an oral presentation to the council. The written reports and oral presentations shall include, but shall not be limited to, information as to the division’s efforts in:*

- A. Meeting revenue targets under section 7 of this ordinance;*
- B. Implementing entrepreneurial strategies including advertising, leasing and concession agreements;*
- C. Pursuing gifts, bequests and donations, including the value and sources of gifts, bequests and donations received;*
- D. Developing agreements with other organizations to provide recreation services;*
- E. Transferring parks and recreation assets within incorporated areas or potential annexations areas to cities; and*
- F. Community outreach and involvement.”*

The following report responds to the reporting requirements of the Omnibus Parks Ordinance and is structured as follows:

- I. Revenues (budgeted v. actual, 2002 v. 2003)
  - a. User fees
    - i. aquatics
    - ii. other
  - b. Enterprise (advertising, leasing, concessions - gifts/bequests/donations - other revenues and cost savings)
  - c. Intergovernmental
  - d. Other miscellaneous revenues
- II. Partnerships to provide additional recreational opportunities
- III. Transfers
- IV. Community outreach and involvement

## Section I. Revenues

The Parks and Recreation Division's 2003 budget totals \$16.4 million. Of that amount, \$1.2 million is anticipated to come from new, entrepreneurial efforts; \$3.6 million is anticipated to be generated by user fee revenue of which a significant portion is based on fee increases the Parks Division implemented in January 2003; \$2.3 million to come from intergovernmental transfers; and \$116,000 is anticipated to come from miscellaneous sources such as special use permits.

**Table 1: Parks Division Revenues 2002 and 2003**

	Through 2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr 2002	Through 2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr 2003	2003 Budget
User Fees (Aquatics and other)	\$1,172,704	\$1,509,629	\$3,608,056
New Enterprise Revenue	\$0	\$364,858	\$1,177,150
Intergovernmental (SWM, Roads, Wastewater, REET)	\$1,230,162	\$2,360,733*	\$2,360,733
Other	\$10,714	\$49,866	\$116,060
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$2,413,580</b>	<b>\$4,285,086</b>	<b>\$7,261,999</b>

\* Fully committed – to be transferred to Parks by end of 2003

### User Fees

User fee revenues in King County Parks and Recreation are very seasonal. In terms of facility availability and demand the peak period for user fee revenues is March to October. From November through February, a large portion of the park system is unavailable for rental, (e.g. grass athletic fields, and outdoor pools at Vashon and Cottage Lake), and demand from the public is generally greatly reduced. Even with the benefit of 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter revenue figures, it is too early to tell with certainty whether the revenue targets for 2003 will be met. Historically, the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter is the highest user fee revenue period of the year. However, some general trends are emerging that are instructive in projecting revenues through the end of the year.

The Division set fees at levels to meet revenue targets established in the Omnibus Parks Ordinance. Generally, for those facilities and services that were available from January through June, demand for services had not dropped significantly in light of fee increases, and in many instances demand did not drop at all. The Division continues to monitor user fee revenue and will continue to report to the Council on a quarterly basis.

### Aquatics User Fees

The user fee revenues identified in the table cover user fees at the three unincorporated area pools (Renton, Tahoma, and Evergreen), the King County Aquatic Center, and the Cottage Lake and Vashon outdoor pools. The table does not include aquatic user fee revenues from those pools the Parks Division is operating under an operating agreement with a city. In order to meet the revenue targets established in the Omnibus Parks Ordinance, the Division needs to increase aquatic user fee revenues by approximately 25% in 2003. In the first quarter of 2003, aquatics user fee revenues for the three unincorporated area pools and the King County Aquatic Center were up approximately 26% in aggregate compared to the first quarter of 2002, slightly above the 25% goal. Through the end of the second quarter of

2003, aquatics user fee revenues were up approximately 28%, compared to the first and second quarters of 2002, again slightly above the 25% goal. The percentage revenue changes for each individual pool during the second quarter (as compared to 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2002) are as follows: Vashon: 66%; KCAC: 44%; Cottage Lake: 33%; Renton Pool: 21%; Tahoma Pool: 10%; Evergreen Pool: 4%. The Parks Division will continue to closely monitor revenue from aquatics user fees to determine whether adjustments in user fees are warranted in order to increase revenue.

The following table identifies individual pools revenues:

**Table 2: Aquatic Users Fees 2002 and 2003**

	<b>Through 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr 2002</b>	<b>Through 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr 2003</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Vashon	\$18,192	\$30,171	66%
Cottage Lake	\$22,145	\$29,575	33%
Evergreen	\$64,842	\$67,573	4%
Renton	\$134,516	\$162,726	21%
Tahoma	\$181,400	\$199,644	10%
KCAC	\$284,943	\$410,853	44%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$706,038</b>	<b>\$905,542</b>	<b>28%</b>

#### **Other User Fees and Rentals**

This category includes athletic field rentals, picnic shelters, building rentals, and recreation programs. These fees apply to the Fairgrounds, Community Centers, and all parks with ballfields or picnic shelters. There is typically very little activity during the first several months of the year for these facilities and programs. For example, of the 117 athletic fields the county owns and operates in 2003, only 9 sand athletic fields are open and available during the months of January and February. Based on the Omnibus Parks Ordinance, athletic field user fees were generally increased 100%, with the exception of sand soccer fields, which were held at 2002 levels. All other user fees were increased an average of 25%.

In aggregate, fee revenue from these sources in the first half of 2003 is up 29% compared to the first half of 2002. The percentage increase for the major categories are as follows: Fields/Facilities: 60%; Recreation Programs: 50%; Fairgrounds: 1%. The 60% increase in field/facility rentals is a marked increase over the 12% increase reported in the first quarter. This increase reflects continued demand at the higher user fees. The Parks Division is also beginning to realize the positive revenue impact of the County Council approved user fee increase for the sand athletic fields that went into effect starting April 1, 2003. With all ballfields open and available for the second and third quarters, and use of picnic shelters increasing with the spring and summer seasons, revenues from field/facility rentals should continue their strong performance during the third quarter. The 50% increase in revenues from recreation programs exceeds the goal of 25%. The Fairgrounds revenue increase of 1% is short of the 25% goal. Given the general state of the economy even the flat Fairgrounds revenues are considered a positive. However, the increased facility rental fees have exposed price sensitivity for the Fairgrounds that the Division is monitoring closely. The King County fair revenues are not included in this report since the fair occurs in July and revenues will be reflected in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter report

**Table 3: Field and Facility User Fee Revenues 2002 and 2003**

	Through 2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr 2002	Through 2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr 2003	% Change
Fields/Facilities	\$215,778	\$344,375	60%
Recreation Programs	\$17,554	\$26,263	50%
Fairgrounds	\$233,334	\$233,449	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$446,666</b>	<b>\$604,087</b>	<b>29%</b>

### **Enterprise Activities**

The 2003 Parks and Recreation Division Budget assumes \$1.2 million in revenue from new ways of doing business. The primary identifiable components to the 2003 enterprise activities are the implementation of a parking fee and concert series at Marymoor Park. The Parking Fee, Concert Series, and RFP efforts already underway are anticipated to generate between \$700,000 and \$800,000 in revenue. This revenue is not guaranteed, but is viewed by the Division as highly likely. In addition the Division has received approximately \$110,000 in revenues from events that occurred in 2002, but the money was received after the 2002 books were closed. Therefore, the revenue is included in the 2003 budget. The Division continues to work hard to identify other entrepreneurial efforts in order to meet the \$1.2 million target.

**Table 4: Enterprise Activities and Anticipated Revenue**

Activity	Revenue through 2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr.	Revenue Anticipated in 2003
Marymoor Parking Fee	\$149,196	\$300,000 to \$400,000
Marymoor Concert Series*	\$50,469*	\$300,000
Various Concessions & RFPs	\$37,726	\$67,000
Other Enterprise Efforts	<u>\$127,467</u>	<u>\$433,000 to \$483,000</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$364,858</b>	<b>\$1,100,000 to \$1,250,000</b>

\*Note: Revenue reflects 3 concerts held in 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter.

### **Marymoor Parking Fee**

The Division began implementing a \$1 parking fee at Marymoor Park in early February. Through June the parking fee has generated \$149,196. The Division placed temporary honor boxes in each of the parking lots throughout the park. During the first quarter, the Division finalized plans for a more permanent system. The system was approved by the Council during the second quarter and will be in place by the end of September. Based on current collection rates, the parking fee is anticipated to generate \$300,000 for the entire year. The Division is optimistic that revenues will increase beyond the projected \$300,000 with the implementation of the new permanent system. The new system should help to increase compliance through ease of use and the ability to provide change to users.

**Concert Series**

The Parks Division signed an agreement for a Concert Series at Marymoor Park that is projected to generate up to \$300,000 in 2003. The Concert Series began in early June and will run through September 5<sup>th</sup>. The Division will see the majority of the revenue from this enterprise activity in the third quarter. The Division has had discussions with potential corporate sponsors regarding a naming right for the concert venue but none have been secured at present. Advertising agreements for the concert series benefiting the Parks Division have been signed with FirstTech Credit Union and Eddie Bauer. Any naming rights and advertising revenues are in addition to the anticipated \$300,000 from the concert series itself.

In addition to the most visible efforts to generate enterprise revenue, the Division has an array of other efforts underway to implement the new ways of doing business.

**RFP**

In the late Fall of 2002 the Division put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) for creative revenue generating ideas. The Division received approximately 30 responses to the RFP in January 2003 [a summary of the RFP responses was included as part of the first quarter report] and has followed up with approximately 20 of them, including small to medium size food and beverage vendors, swimwear vendors, dog wash vendors, and a trail running series. The first two races in the Cougar Mountain Trail Running Series generated \$4,500 and significant volunteer trail maintenance support for Parks.

The Division intends to issue another RFP in the fall of 2003 to expand the possible revenue generating opportunities.

**Driving Range**

The Division completed a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the development and operation of a driving range at Marymoor Park. An RFQ was published at the end of the second quarter to be quickly followed by a Request for Proposal issued to successful respondents to the RFQ. The goal is to have revenues from this operation benefiting Parks during 2004.

**Advertising**

The Division has developed two brochures intended to foster advertising revenue. The first brochure identifies advertising opportunities and prices on ballfield fences, the Velodrome fence, and community center and pool walls. The second brochure identifies a variety of advertising and naming rights opportunities at the King County Aquatic Center, including advertising on the pool liner, the scoreboard, starting blocks, and the outside reader board along the road. The Division has begun sending the brochures out to local corporations. To date several have expressed interest and are discussing different opportunities with the Division, with a few resulting in financial commitments.

The Parks Division advertising campaign has received an impressive amount of exposure with an hour-long call-in radio show on KUOW, newspaper stories and articles in periodicals such as Aqua Magazine and Media Life magazine.

### **Pursuing Gifts, Bequests and Donations**

The Parks and Recreation Division is pursuing opportunities for gifts and donations. The Division has approached local corporations for donations and sponsorships related to individual parks and recreation programs. A list of equipment that can be donated to the County has been created and posted on the Division's web page.

The Division has received a defibrillator from the Federal Way Fire Department. The Division worked with the family of one individual who donated \$6,000 to Cougar Mountain Park.

During the first quarter, the Parks Division received a grant of \$46,202 from the Washington State Department of Agriculture for the King County Fair event. The Friends of Marymoor Park was awarded a \$37,500 grant from the Urban Forestry Program via the Water and Land Resources Division to reforest an area of declining cottonwood trees. The Serve Our Dog Area (SODA) group donated \$25,000 worth of split rail fencing to the project as well.

### **Enterprise Revenue Strategic Plan**

The Division is refining a strategic plan for revenue enhancement. The plan is a comprehensive approach to positioning King County as an advertising partner, program and event facilitator, media partner and entrepreneur. Second quarter activity relating to strategic plan development, entrepreneurial programs, marketing and revenue generation focused on:

- Reviewing the opportunities generated by the 2002 global RFP and subsequent Employee Revenue and Cost Saving Team endeavors.
- Conducting exploratory meetings with representatives of the major media conglomerates including Entercom Seattle, Fisher Broadcasting, Sandusky Radio, Infinity Broadcasting Corporation, Clear Channel, The Seattle PI, and King County Journal.
- Conducting exploratory meetings with major advertising firms such as Sweetgrass, Sedgwick Road and Cole Weber Red Cell to enhance our position as a value-added amenity in major advertising campaigns.
- Conducting exploratory meetings with area Chambers of Commerce and downtown associations, Convention and Tourism Bureaus including the Enumclaw Area Chamber of Commerce, Enumclaw Downtown Partnership, Downtown Seattle, Seattle Sports Commission, Knox Sports, etc.
- Conducting exploratory meetings with corporate entities such as Key Bank, Washington Mutual, Home Depot, Dean Foods, Mutual of Enumclaw Insurance, etc.
- Conducting exploratory meetings with non-profit entities such as the Friends of Marymoor Park, Marymoor Velodrome Association, Sammamish Rowing Association, Northwest Parks Foundation, Marymoor Radio Controlled Flying Club, Marymoor Gardeners, etc.
- Conducted meetings with potential vendors, concessionaires, and public private partners.

### **Employee Cost/Revenue Team**

The Division's employee revenue generating and cost-savings team continues to meet and work on revenue enhancing strategies along with cost saving measures. The team recently implemented the "waddle" program. The Greenhouse/Nursery is fabricating and distributing chip waddle logs that will be used to replace the current anti-erosion straw devices. The wood chip waddles are plastic netting or "socks" or "logs", filled with 100% natural, recycled wood chips. When the waddles are staked in place, water flows through the logs while the rough-edged wood chips hold back soil, silt, and debris. In 2003, the waddle program is projected to net \$5,000 in revenue in addition to providing environmental benefits.

The revenue team has also recently implemented party packages at pools that should generate \$500 in revenue and the direct sale of swimming merchandise projected to generate \$3,000 in revenue.

As part of the capital program, computerized lighting system at athletic fields have been installed which allows for more efficient operation of our lighting system. This system is projected to save \$31,000 per year. Other efficiencies include the installation of low flow toilets at the Renton Pool and self-compacting garbage cans at Marymoor Park.

In the first quarter, the Division implemented the consolidation of email accounts for field maintenance personnel, saving the Division nearly \$12,000 a year. Other examples of revenue generating ideas that are currently being developed include the development of campgrounds and yurts at various park locations.

### **Revised Financial Systems**

The Parks Division has revised its financial tracking system in ARMS by the development of an organizational structure consistent with the new mission of the Division. Project accounting has been refined to ensure the ability to track expenditures by site or project and link it to revenues for each, something that was not easily done with the former system. An electronic, relational database time sheet tracking system is in the process of final testing for implementation. It will allow each employee to enter data on a daily basis for entry into ARMS electronically for labor distribution. This will replace the current manual system.

### **Intergovernmental**

The 2003 Parks and Recreation Division budget includes \$2.36 million in Intergovernmental revenues, including \$640,000 of Surface Water Management dollars to support maintenance of the resource and ecological lands, \$288,804 in Road Fund dollars to support maintenance of the unincorporated area regional trails, \$500,000 in one-time Wastewater dollars for an easement, and \$931,929 in REET dollars to support the Division capital program and land management responsibilities.

### **Other**

The Division anticipates \$116,060 in 2003 from miscellaneous revenue sources, for example special use permits for utilities and other private uses of public land. This estimate is based on historical revenues from these sources.

## **Section II. Partnerships - implementing agreements with other organizations**

The primary approach the Parks Division will utilize to develop agreements with user group organizations to provide recreation services is the Association Development Operating Partnerships ADOPs Program. The ADOP Program is a creation and recommendation of the Active Sports Youth Recreation Commission (ASPYRe) to provide grants to user groups and community-based organizations to develop, operate and/or maintain a public park or recreation facility.

There is a total of \$605,000 in the Division's 2003 Capital Budget for the ADOP Program. A 2003 Budget Proviso requires the Council to approve ADOP Program guidelines and criteria before allowing the Executive to implement the program. The County Council adopted the motion adopting the ADOPS program guidelines and selection criteria on March 31, 2003.

The Parks Division is working with user groups to identify partnership opportunities. The following is a list of user groups who have expressed interest for an ADOP grant award:

- T.O.P.S. / King County Regional Indoor Tennis Center (with Tennis Outreach Programs for Puget Sound)
- Pacific Northwest Rugby Union / King County Regional Rugby Fields
- PSSBL/FAF/King County Regional Community Baseball Stadium
- Maple Valley Sub-Regional Field Complex with the Tahoma Sports Council
- Regional RC Model Airplane Flying Facility with Several RC groups
- WRS (We Ride Sideways)-West/King County Pacific NW Mountainboarding Facility
- BBTC / King County Backcountry Mountainbiking Course (with Bicycle Trails Association)
- Small Craft / Rowing Facility in South King County
- Disc NW / King County regional Ultimate Frisbee Fields

In addition to the ADOPs Program, the Division has implemented or is working on a number of other partnerships, identified below.

King County reached agreement with the Boys and Girls Club to operate the West Hill and Gold Creek Community Centers under a long-term lease arrangement.

The Division reached agreement with the Redmond Little League on a concession agreement to operate and maintain the new Redmond Ridge Park, which opened June 1<sup>st</sup>.

The Division reached agreement with Northshore Youth Soccer Association to help develop soccer fields in the region without increasing maintenance and operating expenditures to King County.

The Division signed supplemental maintenance agreements allowing user groups to do quick preparation maintenance of ballfields prior to games at White Center Park, the South County and Snoqualmie Valley ballfields. SEIU 925 Labor Management Committee (LMC) worked collaboratively with the management team to develop these agreements.



The Division developed two partnerships to provide interpretive programs that were eliminated in the 2003 budget. The first partnership was with Nature Visions, a non-profit, which will continue providing interpretive classes to schools throughout King County using the Parks Division interpretive program materials. Nature Visions was formed by two former King County Park Division employees. The second partnership is with the City of Kent and the Friends of Soos Creek Park to continue providing interpretive/educational walks at Soos Creek Park.

The Division continues to work with a user group to develop a privately financed athletic field complex at Marymoor Park. The complex would be available to the public and would result in no maintenance or operation burden on the Parks Division.

The Division has partnered with the Serve Our Dog Area user group to sell six-month parking passes for Marymoor Park. The effort has generated additional pass sales for the Division, generated more than \$2,000 for the organization, and has increased SODA membership by nearly 90 members.

In addition to pursuing new agreements with organizations, the Division is currently working with existing user groups to review and potentially revise long term use agreements to ensure County Park Division costs are fully reimbursed, generate small amounts of revenue and protect the long term use of the activity. Examples include new, long term agreements for the pea patch, velodrome and rowing club areas at Marymoor Park. The goal of the Parks Division is to work with these valued user groups to ensure that County maintenance costs are covered. The Division also is interested in generating net revenue from these agreements to the extent the user groups have ability to pay.

### Section III. Transferring Parks and Recreation Assets

At the start of 2002 the Parks and Recreation Division had a total of 10 local pools and two-dozen local parks and community centers inside incorporated boundaries. The total cost of operating these facilities was approximately \$7 million. To date, King County has completed transfer agreements on 8 of the 10 local in-city pools (Redmond, Mercer Island, Kent, Federal Way, Northshore, Tukwila, Enumclaw and Mount Si) and sixteen local parks. Of the two remaining local in-city pools, the Mt. Rainier Pool in Des Moines is open to the public under a one-year operating agreement and a long-term lease-back arrangement has been reached on the Auburn Pool whereby King County has no maintenance or operations obligations.

The parks that have been transferred include:

Juanita Beach Park	City of Kirkland
Eastgate Park	City of Bellevue
Manor Hill Park	City of Bellevue
Lake Burien School Site	City of Burien
Jenkins Creek Park	City of Covington
Luther Burbank Park	City of Mercer Island
Lea Hill Park	City of Auburn
Auburndale Two Park	City of Auburn
Salmon Creek Waterway	City of Burien
Lake Wilderness Park	City of Maple Valley
Fort Dent Park	City of Tukwila
Beaver Lake Park	City of Sammamish
Des Moines Creek Park	City of SeaTac
Si View Park	Si View Metropolitan Park District
Shamrock Park	Si View Metropolitan Park District
Bridle Crest Trail (Redmond)	City of Redmond

The Division continues to work with cities on the transfer of the remaining local parks.

In addition to the transfer agreements identified above, the County reached agreement with the Boys and Girls Club to operate the West Hill and Gold Creek Community Centers under a long-term lease arrangement.

## Section IV. Community Outreach and Involvement

The King County Parks and Recreation Division have pursued broader and more aggressive outreach techniques as part of its new way of doing business. A significant step forward was a plan developed collaboratively with consultant Lee Springgate of the Point Wilson Group. The plan outlines a long-term public outreach strategy to help the Parks Division reconnect with the public, user groups and decision-makers it serves. Per the Omnibus Parks Ordinance, this outreach strategy was delivered to the clerk of the Council in February 2003.

Outreach activities include:

- *Reconnecting People to Their Parks*, long-term outreach strategy developed collaboratively with The Point Wilson Group
- Executive listserve messages
- User Fee increase outreach
- Marymoor parking fee outreach
- Web page enhancements

**Reconnecting People to Their Parks: Outreach and Reconnecting Strategy:** Part of changing the way King County Parks does business is enhancing its relationship with the public it serves. In November 2002 a public outreach steering committee was established to work with the Point Wilson Group to develop a long-term outreach strategy for reconnecting with the public. The group met five times for two hours each to work with Point Wilson consultants Lee Springgate and Christi Zellerhoff to develop the plan. The result of the effort is a comprehensive plan for reconnecting with the public. A copy of the plan was delivered to the clerk of the council in February 2003. An internal working group was established in February 2003 to implement the plan.

The Outreach Strategies Group has met bi-monthly focusing its' efforts on key strategies to identify and develop a plan to reach key stakeholders. Lead staff has been assigned to be accountable as a first step in establishing regular, ongoing communication with stakeholders. Four public meetings are planned in August 2003 at various locations throughout King County. The public will have the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions about how Parks' new way of doing business is working; provide input on how funding is directed, and tell staff what they want to see as Parks continues to cut costs and pursue new revenue generating initiatives. An on-line survey was also developed to give the public another avenue to provide input that will help guide the Division to improve service and meet public needs.

**Executive Listserve Messages:** The Executive listserve was created in spring 2002 to keep hundreds of public meeting participants apprised of rapid progress in the parks transition plan. At sign-in, meeting participants were asked to provide their e-mail addresses if interested in receiving updates on the parks transition.

Initially the listserve was used by the Executive to communicate significant milestones in the parks transition process such as the Task Force Phase I recommendations, the Executive's recommendations to Council and new, entrepreneurial ventures. With the rapidly increasing

pace of change, communication has occurred more regularly. Listserv messages are also available on the Executive's website.

The listserv initially reached 400 people and has expanded to reach 732. Outreach strategies used to expand the list include:

- The online poll on the future of King County parks, posted in conjunction with public meetings in spring 2002, asked people to submit their e-mail if interested in receiving updates on the parks transition.
- The parks transition website invites people to sign-up for the listserv to receive regular updates on transition activities.
- Cards with the transition website address and directions on how to subscribe to the listserv are given out at parks facilities and mailed with reservation information.
- Written responses to comments or inquiries from parks users invite them to subscribe to the listserv for regular updates.

**Fee Increase Outreach – General:** A broad outreach effort was undertaken as part of the process for increasing user fees at park facilities. Proposed fees were:

- Published in the Seattle Times,
- Posted at affected facilities,
- Posted on the Internet,
- Direct mailed to over 400 user groups, and
- A special e-mail address was established to receive feedback

Approximately 280 comments were received. Of those:

- Three commented on pea-patch fees
- Three commented on general recreation fees
- Eight commented on aquatics fees
- 266 focused on parking charges at Marymoor

The following summary on user fee increase outreach and response, was previously submitted to Council in January 2003:

*Please find attached below the new Park and Recreation user fees. These fee increases have been signed by the Director of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks and will take effect January 2, 2003.*

*Consistent with Ordinance No. 14509 (Omnibus Ordinance), proposed user fees were developed based on the criteria required under the Omnibus Ordinance. The criteria included the target revenue rates adopted in the Omnibus Ordinance.*

*Proposed fees were transmitted to the County Council prior to the Thanksgiving holiday. The fees were published in the Seattle Times, consistent with the Omnibus Ordinance, on Friday, November 29. In addition, the proposed fees were posted at affected facilities, posted on the Internet on November 27, and direct mailed to over 400 user groups. The Parks department set up a special e-mail address: [parks.feedback@metrokc.gov](mailto:parks.feedback@metrokc.gov) to receive feedback. In addition feedback was also accepted by mail. The fee notices indicated that comments on the proposed fees would be accepted through December 20.*

*Approximately 280 comments on fees were received by e-mail and five were received by regular mail. Of those, three commented on pea-patch fees (generally indicating that the increased fees were in line with other pea patches); three commented on general recreation fees; and eight commented on aquatics fees. The remainder of the comments (approximately 266) focused on parking charges at Marymoor in response to broadcast e-mails sent by SODA (Serve Our Dog Areas).*

*The over-arching theme was that \$1 for parking was acceptable; \$20 per month was acceptable, but \$125 per year was too high. The annual pass was the exclusive focus of most of the comments. Most respondents indicated that an annual fee that was less than \$100 was more acceptable. Respondents indicated that convenience was important and that they preferred the option of a pass so they would not have to carry correct change. Many people also commented on how important Marymoor was to them and that they were willing to pay to keep it open. Others had similar comments about King County Pools and how important it was to keep those open. Respondents frequently commented that they paid taxes for parks and therefore new or increased fees were not appropriate. Several, however, recognized the current revenue realities facing the County.*

*In response to the comments and continuing staff review of the proposed fees, several proposed fees were modified. In particular, an annual fee for Marymoor parking will not be implemented at this time. Instead an introductory six-month pass for \$50 will be offered. The \$125 annual pass was not popular, and current plans anticipate implementing parking at Marymoor in phases - using honor boxes through July, followed by electronic technology thereafter. A six-month pass would facilitate this transition. In addition, several aquatics and equipment rental fees were reduced from proposed levels, based on feedback from users and parks staff.*

*Thank you for your attention. Please let me know if you have any questions.*

*Bob Burns, Acting Manager  
Parks and Recreation Division*

**Fee Increase Outreach – Marymoor Parking Fee:** Because responses to fee increases overwhelmingly addressed the Marymoor parking fee, the fee was modified and outreach activities were implemented. Outreach activities included:

- A partnership with Serve Our Dog Area to sell six-month parking passes, and
- The first day of the parking fee staff were present at Marymoor to answer questions.

In response to feedback, the proposed annual fee for Marymoor parking is not being offered. Instead, an introductory six-month pass for \$50 is being offered.

A partnership with Serve Our Area (S.O.D.A.) was established for selling parking passes. This outreach technique provided mutual benefits to King County and S.O.D.A. S.O.D.A. sold the \$50 parking pass to its members for \$50 with \$5 going to support S.O.D.A. Selling the parking pass allowed S.O.D.A. to raise money for its stewardship of the off-leash area at Marymoor and boosted its membership.

On the first day of the one-dollar parking fee at Marymoor, King County staff was present on a voluntary basis in parking lots throughout the park to explain how the parking fee worked, and answer questions about why it is necessary. Staff distributed fact sheets to the thousands of Saturday visitors and helped Marymoor users navigate the collection system.

**Web Page Enhancements:** The Parks Division has been steadily making improvements to its web pages. The Division has been posting all information regarding new ways of doing business, the Parks Task Force and the Executive's Business Transition Plan on its web pages. The Division has also revamped the Parks web page, making it easier for citizens to navigate the site, find information on individual parks and park features. The Division has also added a comment box on its web page to accept citizen input.

**Other Outreach Efforts – Volunteers:** The Parks Division has a total of 72 volunteer events scheduled on 15 different park sites for the first 6 months of the year. These volunteer efforts generated about 900 individual volunteers and 1800 hours of labor.